

105.2091_ Catherine Rastall_ pl

New Brunswick, New Jersey,

September 13, 1926.

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THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY :
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Statement of Miss Catherine Rastall taken on the
above date at the office of the Howell Lumber Company, 260
Burnet Street, at 2:30 P. M.

GEORGE D. ZIEGLER
OFFICIAL STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER
SUPREME COURT EXAMINER
FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY
COURT HOUSE } NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.
 } ELIZABETH, N. J.

Joachim Wichmann,
Assistant.

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Office of Howell Lumber Company,

260 Barnet Street,

New Brunswick, New Jersey,

September 13, 1926, 2:30 P. M.

Statement of Miss Catherine Rastall taken at the above address by Joachim Wichmann, Assistant Official Stenographic Reporter of Middlesex County, in response to questioning by Timothy H. Pfeiffer, Esq.

BY MR. PFEIFFER:

Q Miss Rastall, if you will be good enough to give me a statement, which Mr. Wichmann, the Assistant Official Stenographic Reporter of Middlesex County, will take down stenographically, I shall appreciate it greatly. The only statement which I have yet had from you is the one which you made to me on Thursday afternoon in the automobile on the road between New Brunswick and Bound Brook; is that correct? A Yes.

Q And at that time the statement was incomplete? A Yes.

Q And I am now asking you if you will be good enough to give me a complete statement of the events of the night of September 14th in relation to what you saw and heard, having to do with the murder of Dr. Hall and Mrs. Mills. Do you remember what the name of the movie was that you saw in the State Theatre on the night of September 14, 1922? A I do not; no, sir.

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- Q Do you remember when you went into the theatre?
- A You mean what time?
- Q Yes. A Well, I should say it was between half-past seven and eight. I could not tell you just exactly.
- Q Were you alone while you were in the theatre? A Yes, sir.
- Q And did you have an appointment to meet Mr. Corrine after the movies? A No, sir.
- Q Now, how do you fix the time when you came out of the State Theatre? A I looked at my watch as I was coming out.
- Q What time was it? A Just around ten.
- Q Was it a little before ten? A Just a little before ten.
- Q Had the first movies been completed and the second series for the night started? A Yes.
- Q And you stayed through part of the second till it came to the place where you went into the theatre? A Yes.
- Q Did you have on a wrist watch that night? A Yes, sir.
- Q The same one you have now? A The same one I have now, yes.
- Q Was your watch accurate? A Yes, sir.
- Q As you came out of the theatre you say you looked at your watch? A Yes, sir.
- Q And it was just a few minutes before ten o'clock?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Then did you turn toward George Street as you came out of the theatre on Livingston Avenue? A Yes, sir.

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Q And then if you will just state in your own way what you did. A Why, I was going down to get the trolley, you see, and I was near the Y. M. C. A., just by the Y. M. C. A., which is next door to the theatre, and Mr. Coroline came out and he asked me if I was going home and I told him yes. He said well, if I would get in his car he would drive me home.

Q Now, Miss Mantall, where do you live? A On Senior Street. That is right off College Avenue.

Q The street address? A 13.

Q That is down through the center of New Brunswick and on out toward Bueloch Park? A Yes, sir.

Q Now, what did you say to him when he offered to take you home? A I said yes.

Q So you got in the car. Did you get in the front seat?

A Yes, sir.

Q And was that his green Apperson car? A Yes, sir.

Q And that is an open car, is it not? A Yes, sir.

Q Or was an open car. And there was no one else in the car? A No, sir.

Q Now, will you describe the route that you took from the time you got into the car until you got to the place where you parked in the Phillips Lane?

A Went down Livingston Avenue to George Street, through George Street to Hamilton, through Hamilton to College Avenue, through College Avenue to George Street, George Street to Landing Lane, through Landing Lane to Easton.

Avenue, Easton Avenue to DeRassey's Lane, and then through DeRassey's Lane to--I don't know what lane you call it, but it is the lane that goes to the house. I don't remember.

Q It is the first lane that goes to Phillips?

A The first lane on the left.

Q Is it the first lane? A It is the first lane on the left. I guess there isn't any lanes on the right, but it is the first lane on the left.

Q Are you absolutely sure it was the first lane on the left?

A The first lane on the left, yes.

Q Had you been there previously with Mr. Gorsline before this night? A Yes, sir.

Q Have you any idea how many times? A I couldn't tell you but it wasn't many.

Q Were the times previous to the night of September 14th in September, 1922, or some time before September, 1922?

A In September.

Q In September? A Yes.

Q On those previous times had you parked in the same place, approximately? A Approximately; yes, sir.

Q You had always turned in at the first lane on the left?

A Yes, sir.

Q So that you recall definitely that it was the first lane?

A The first lane; yes, sir.

Q When you went with the State troopers and Inspector Underwood the other day to the scene of the murder, did

you point out to them the place where the car was in which you were on the night of September 14th?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you tell them that it was the first lane on the left?

A Yes, sir.

Q Do you remember how far in from DeRussey's Lane the car was parked on the lane on the left?

A Well, I should say approximately about forty feet. About two car lengths I should say it was, about.

Q Just in? A Just in. It wasn't in far.

Q Just off DeRussey's Lane? A Yes, sir.

Q What kind of lights were on as you went into Phillips Lane, this first lane on the left?

A Well, now, I don't know. I didn't know, but they told me that it was amber lights. Now, I don't know.

Q You mean they meant by amber lights that it was the headlights on full? A Yes, sir.

Q Your point is that you don't remember whether it was the full headlights or simply the dimmers?

A No, I couldn't tell you. They weren't very bright. Now, I couldn't tell you whether they were on full or whether they were not.

Q The only recollection, then, that you have is, whether they were on full or not, they weren't very bright?

A That is all I have; yes, sir.

Q Were you able to see very far ahead of you in the road?

A Not very far; no, sir.

- Q Did Mr. Soroline drive the car fairly fast from in front of the Y. M. C. A. out to the lane, or did you go out at a moderate speed?
- A That is kind of a funny question. I don't know. It wasn't exceedingly fast, no. Just kept right along going, didn't slow up, didn't try to slow along.
- Q You didn't stop any place other than where you finally parked the car in the little lane, did you?
- A No, sir.
- Q How long do you think you remained in Phillips Lane parked?
- A About ten or fifteen minutes.
- Q From ten to fifteen minutes. How do you place that amount of time as having been there, Miss Bastall?
- A Because--well, the only way I could place it was that I got home about 10:20, a little after that, 10:20 or 10:25, and I figured it took us about five minutes or so to go up there, and a little time to go back, and that is the only way I could figure it.
- Q You think it would only take about five minutes to get from where the car was parked to your home?
- A Oh, yes. Yes, sir.
- Q Just to interject this: When you got home was your watch stopped at 10:20 and did your father look at the clock and say it was 10:30? Someone told me that.
- A No. I will tell you how that was. My watch was not stopped at all, but when I got in the house I didn't look at my watch, but when I went to bed and took the watch off

to wind it. It was just about 10:30. That is where that came in.

Q When you got home was your father there?

A Yes, sir; and my mother.

Q And your mother? A Yes, sir.

Q Did they both see you come in? A Yes, sir.

Q Did they observe what time it was when you came in?

A They said that it was about 10:25.

Q Ten-twenty-five? A Yes, sir.

Q While the car was parked in the lane were the lights turned out? A Yes, sir.

Q And were they turned on again until you went out of the lane? A No, sir.

Q Did anything occur in or near the lane that night out of the ordinary? I mean by that, I understand you heard shots and so forth. A Yes, sir.

Q Will you just tell us what you saw and heard?

A Well, we weren't there very long, only a couple of minutes or so, when we heard kind of muzzling voices, and I thought they came from the rear of the car. Of course there is a discrepancy.

Q That would be toward Easton Avenue?

A No, that would be toward DeRusse's Lane.

Q I beg your pardon; toward DeRusse's Lane.

A That would be toward the rear of the car.

Q Yes. A And it wasn't very long after that,

maybe a couple of minutes or so, when we heard the one

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shot, and then a scream, and then three shots.

Q Did you hear any moaning or mumbling or wailing after the three shots? A I did not; no, sir. And so then I said we had better go. I said, "We had better get out of here."

Q It is reported in the papers that you said, "My God, we had better get out of here."

A No, I never said that. No, sir. I just said, "We had better get out of here."

Q Now, Mr. Gorline, I understand, says that he remembers that he heard the mumbling, and so forth, in front of the car.

A Yes, I know it. That is the discrepancy, and I can't figure it out yet, because as far as I can remember that seemed to come from DeRassey's lane. That would be in the rear of the car, you see.

Q What kind of mumbling was it? Was it as though they were quarreling? A No, it just seemed as if somebody was talking; that's all; but you couldn't understand what they were saying.

Q Was there any other automobile in or near where you were while you were there, that you saw?

A I didn't see any; no, sir.

Q Did you understand Mr. Gorline says there was another automobile parked in the lane or near the lane near you?

A The only thing I understood was that he said when he came in the lane he saw an automobile go out. That is the only way I understand it. Now, I don't know whether he

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said that or not.

Q Did you see an automobile come out as you went in the lane? A No, I did not.

Q And he said nothing to you about it?

A He said nothing to me about it; no, sir.

Q Inspector Underwood is quoted in the newspapers as saying that Mr. Corraline told him that he saw a man pass the car, Mr. Corraline's car, and that Mr. Corraline said, "Hello, what are you doing here?" Did that occur?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q And you were in the car all the time?

A I was in the car right alongside of him all the time.

Q And if it had occurred you would certainly have heard it?

A Probably; yes, sir.

Q I mean, there is no doubt?

A There is no doubt but you would have heard someone speak, alongside of him.

Q You didn't hear anyone speak? A No, sir.

Q You didn't see anyone go by the car? A No, sir.

Q You don't know that Mr. Corraline said that?

A Well, they told me that he said it too.

Q Inspector Underwood is reported to have said it?

A They told me that he said it.

Q Going back to the mumbling, you said that it did not sound like quarreling? A No, it did not.

Q What do you mean? Was it just like two people?

A Just like somebody talking. You know what I mean.

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Ordinarily just talking, but you couldn't understand just what they were saying, and it didn't,--you know, I didn't take particular notice, but it didn't sound as if they were quarrelling. It just sounded as if they were talking. It was a mumbling.

Q Did they continue until the time you heard the shots?

A No, sir.

Q It had stopped? A It had stopped; yes, sir.

Q Before you heard the first shot?

A It seemed to me as if people were walking away. They were just--they were talking away and going. Of course I didn't take particular notice of it, but I didn't hear it afterward.

Q And it had stopped before you heard the first shot?

A To my knowledge it had; yes, sir.

Q You mean, two or three minutes before the first shot?

A I should say; yes, sir.

Q So that there was no sudden stoppage of the mumbling followed by a shot at once? A No, sir.

Q When the police took you to the scene the other day you took them to the place where you thought the car was parked that night? A Yes, sir.

Q Did they then take you to the place where the crabapple tree had been? A Yes, sir.

Q And did you walk from the place where your car was parked, where Mr. Corraline's car was parked that night, to the crabapple tree? A Yes, sir.

Q In a straight line?

A Yes, sir.

Q Have you been informed that that is about seven hundred feet? A Yes, sir.

Q Well, now, in the condition in which the lights on Mr. Soroline's car were that night, was it possible for you to see the crabapple tree or any individuals that might have been there? A No, sir; and I--and they told me-- Now, I don't know whether this ought to go on the record or not.

Q Go right ahead. A They told me that the way the car was parked that you could see by our headlights over to the crabapple tree, and I can't figure it out yet. Q You mean they told you that at Somerville or when you were at the scene?

A They told me that both times, and I can't see yet how you could, because we were parked in this way (indicating).

Q Indicating where? I mean, it will be hard to get it on the record. What do you mean? You were parked facing the--

A We were parked facing the Phillips farm, but the way the lane went--I had never seen it in the daytime--but the way the lane went, it went around kind of a curve, and they said the crabapple tree was over here (indicating). They said by our headlights we could see the crabapple tree, but I don't see how you could because we were facing this way.

Q Which was facing towards Phillips farm?

A Towards Phillips Farm, and the crabapple tree was off to

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the side.

Q Yes. A But you couldn't see seven hundred feet.

Q Even if the car had been parked facing directly the crab-apple tree you could not see seven hundred feet?

A No, sir.

Q So you could not see the crabapple tree from where you were parked? A Yes, sir.

Q You mean by "yes" that you could not have seen?

A Could not; yes.

Q So that you left the lane immediately after the final three shots? A Yes, sir.

Q Have you any recollection of how long an interval there was between the first shot and the next three shots?

A Just a small interval. Just as if there was one shot, and then a scream was right between there, and then the three shots.

Q Was the scream that of a woman?

A Well, I don't know as I could say that. It was a frightened scream, and I would not say whether it was or not. You know what I mean, whether I would be sure that night.

Q But it was obviously a person who was frightened?

A Frightened; yes, sir.

Q It was difficult for you to determine under the circumstances whether it was a man or a woman?

A Yes, sir.

Q You haven't any doubt but what it was a woman that was killed, have you?

A Of course, now I don't believe I have any doubt, no, but it was a frightened scream. That is about all I could say about it.

Q To go back, now, to the mumbling of the voices, do I understand you to say that it seemed as though it was two people in conversation and that it died away because the people seemed to be walking away from where you were?

A Yes, sir. I would not say it was two people because I don't know; you know what I mean. It seemed people; that is all. I could not say whether it was two or whether it was more than two.

Q But the sound of their voices seemed to die away because they got farther and farther away from you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Miss Rastall, until you told last week the incidents which you have just described, had you ever told anyone else?

A No, sir.

Q So the authorities at Benerville are the first persons that you ever told or that you ever made this statement to? A Yes, sir.

Q They are the first people who know, apart from Mr. Carline and yourself, so far as you know, that you had been in the lane that night? A Yes, sir.

Q Was the night particularly dark or not?

A Well, I thought it was dark. I thought it was good and dark.

Q Do you remember whether the stars were out?

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- A I couldn't remember that.
- Q I suppose Mr. Gersline's car had the top up, did it not?
- A Oh, yes, sir.
- Q And it seemed to be a dark night to you?
- A Well, it seemed to me a dark night.
- Q And you did not notice any other cars from the time you left Easton Avenue until you went back to Easton Avenue, is that correct?
- A Yes, sir. Yes, sir; I did not notice any cars there.
- Q So far as you saw, there were no cars parked on Easton Avenue or in the lane or anywhere else? A No, sir.
- Q In that vicinity? A No, sir.
- Q Did you see Mrs. Gibson while you were in the lane that night? A No, sir.
- Q Did you hear a voice saying, "Explain those letters," or anything of that kind? A No, sir.
- Q Did you see a mule in the lane that night?
- A No, sir.
- Q Did you hear a mule bray that night? A No, sir.
- Q Did you see Mrs. Hall or Willie Stevens or Harry Carpenter or any of them there that night? A No, sir.
- Q Or did you see them anywhere that night? A No, sir.
- Q Did you see Dr. Hall or Mrs. Mills anywhere that night?
- A No, sir.
- Q Did you have any conversation with Mr. Gersline that night in which the name of Dr. Hall or the name of Mrs. Mills was mentioned? A No, sir.

Q Did Mr. Gorsline ever say anything to you about the relationship--I mean ever prior to the murders, did he ever say anything to you about the relationship of Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills? A No, sir.

Q He never said anything to you about notes having passed between Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills? A No, sir.

Q Did you know that there were notes passing between Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills? A No, sir.

Q Do you know whether any member of the church knew that there were such notes in existence? A No, sir.

Q I understand that you have already said that you did not have any knowledge whatever of the relationship between Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills, is that right, of any improper relationship between Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills?

A That is correct. That means that I did not know.

Q Well, now, on that, Miss Restall, what I want to get at is: Did you, by innuendo or by what you saw or what you heard or the way people said things or did things, have any intimation at all that there was any improper relationship between Dr. Hall and Mrs. Mills?

A No, sir.

Q So it came as a shock to you when you were told that they had been murdered together? A Yes, sir.

Q How well do you know Mrs. Hall?

A Only from the church.

Q Had you seen her frequently before September 14, 1922?

A Only just in the church and Sunday school.

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Q What were your duties in the church? You weren't in the choir, were you? A Yes, I was in the choir.

Q You were in the choir? A Yes, sir.

Q And were you in any other of the church organizations?

A No. Just the Sunday school.

Q Were you in St. Mary's Guild?

A No, I didn't belong to St. Mary's Guild. Only the choir and the Sunday school; that is all.

Q Are you able to remember when you were at Mrs. Hall's house the last time prior to the murders?

A I couldn't tell you.

Q Was it some little time, I mean?

A I should say it was. It may have been the Friday before, but I would not say because you see I worked at the experiment station right across from there, and we used to have choir rehearsals at Friday night, of course, and I used to go there sometimes for supper.

Q You mean it may have been, then, the Friday before September 14? A Before September 14.

Q And if it was that Friday you were there for supper?

A Yes, sir. I don't know how that will react.

Q All we want to know is what all the facts are.

A You see I worked right across there at the experiment station, and I lived way up at the other end of the town.

Q Did you ever discuss with Mrs. Hall or ever say anything to her anything about Dr. Hall's relationship with Mrs.

Mills? A No, sir.

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- Q Did you ever hear anybody else ever say anything to her about it? A No, sir.
- Q Was there ever anything that occurred in the behavior of Mrs. Hall, or in anything that you heard her say, that indicated to your mind that she knew of any improper relationship between Dr. Hall and Mrs. Mills?
- A No, sir.
- Q I have forgotten. Did I ask you whether you ever talked with Mr. Coroline about the relationship of Dr. Hall and Mrs. Mills? A You asked me that and I said no.
- Q So you don't know, then, whether he knew of any improper relationship between Dr. Hall and Mrs. Mills?
- A No, sir.
- Q Prior to the murders? A No, sir.
- Q Now, are you able to tell me when was the next time that you saw or communicated with Mr. Coroline after he left you at your home on the night of September 14 at 10:30?
- A The next day, Friday night, at choir.
- Q At the church? A Yes, sir.
- Q And what was the conversation you had with him then?
- A It wasn't anything pertaining to the night before.
- Q Nothing whatever was said, then, on Friday night about what had happened the night before? A No, sir.
- Q When you left the lane on Thursday night, did Mr. Coroline turn his car completely around, or what did he do, back out or what?
- A Backed out into the lane, and then went ahead.

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Q Backed out into the lane and then went--

A Right ahead.

Q Right ahead, and came out on Easton Avenue?

A Yes, sir.

Q What was the route you took home?

A Through Landing Lane to George Street, College Avenue to my home.

Q What was the conversation you had with him after you said, "Let's get out of here," or words to that effect?

A Gee, I don't remember, only that I think we said something about wondering what the shots were, and that was all.

Q My point is this: On the way home, then, I understand that you and he did not discuss what you would say in the event of anything being asked you? A No, sir.

Q You said nothing to him whatever about the happenings of Thursday night or Friday night when you saw him at choir practice? A No, sir.

Q When was the next time you saw him after Friday?

A Saturday noon.

Q Did you meet him on Saturday noon by appointment?

A No, sir.

Q How did you happen to meet him?

A He came up, he and his cousin.

Q Where? A To my home.

Q Who was with him? A His cousin Harold Pick. That was after we had heard about the finding of the bodies.

Q About what time was it Saturday afternoon?

A Well, I should say around a little after two o'clock, two, a quarter after two, along there. I had been downtown and I had seen it on the bulletin board on Snyder's window, and of course when I came home, why they came to the door, and Harold said that they were going, did I hear about it, or had I heard about it, and he said that. I told them I had, and he said, well, they were going up, and he wanted to know if I wanted to go along.

Q These questions were asked by Mr. Pick and not by Mr. Gorsline? A Yes, by Mr. Pick.

Q What did you say? A And I said yes, so I went and got in the car, in Mr. Gorsline's car, and we went up to the place.

Q Did you sit on the seat with Mr. Gorsline?

A No, I sat in the back.

Q Then you went up to the scene, and what happened there?

A Well, we parked the car on DeRusse's Lane and went in the other lane, and when we got there--

Q One minute. Did you walk in, do you recall, the same lane where you were parked in on the Thursday night?

A No, the lane where we walked in was the lane leading into the crabapple tree.

Q So you went farther up DeRusse's Lane until you came to this other lane you have just spoken of? A Yes, sir.

Q Which is the one right near the crabapple tree?

A Which is the one that you go to the crabapple tree, and

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when we got there he pointed across--

Q Who? A Mr. Coraline, and he pointed across and he said, "That is where we were parked."

Q You and he were standing alone when he said that?

A Yes, standing there, and he said, "That is where we were parked," and he said, "If we could have turned the light on, why, we might have been able to see," or, "We probably could see," or something, but I don't think that he realized the same as I, that it was so far away.

Q When he pointed did he point accurately in the direction where your car was parked?

A Well, he just pointed across like that.

Q I mean, pointing toward the first lane that came off DeLuessey's Lane? A Yes, sir.

Q Then did he say anything more?

A No, not then.

Q And then you drove back with him to your home?

A Yes, sir.

Q When was the next time you saw him?

A Sunday.

Q Was that at church? A Yes, sir.

Q And did you have a conversation with him about the events of Thursday night then? A Yes, sir.

Q What was that? A Well, that was just to the effect that we should not say anything about it.

Q About having been out there? A Yes, sir.

Q You said that you would not and he said that he would

not, is that right? A Yes, sir. That was just between ourselves.

Q You were first taken to Somerville on Wednesday last, weren't you? A No, sir. I was taken once before that.

Q When? You mean several weeks ago? A Yes, sir.

Q I see. And then you were taken to Somerville--you were called for? I mean, you were asked to come to Somerville last Wednesday night? A Yes, sir.

Q And you went with your father and Mr. Pettit, didn't you?

A No. Last Wednesday night I went with my father.

Q Alone? A Yes, sir.

Q And then did Mr. Pettit come over to Somerville while you were there? A Mr. Pettit came over; yes, sir.

Q And before you went to Somerville last Wednesday did you communicate in any way with any representatives of the defense in this case? A Wednesday? No, sir.

Q Or did you talk to Mrs. Hall or any member of the Hall or Stevens or Carpenter families? A No, sir.

Q It was only on the following morning, Thursday?

A Afternoon it was.

Q It was Thursday afternoon that you saw Mr. Russell Watson, wasn't it? A Yes, sir.

Q And following that conference with him you met me on the road between Bound Brook and New Brunswick?

A Yes, sir.

Q And from there you went on directly to Somerville?

A Must I answer that?

Q Not unless you want to. My only point is this. Put it this way. If you had any such conversations with him, would anything that you said or he said throw any further light on the solution of the murder? A No, sir.

Q You are now telling me the whole truth, are you not, Miss Rastall, as to what happened on the night of September 14? A Yes, sir.

Q You are not concealing anything? A No, sir.

Q As to what happened? A No, sir.

Q That has any bearing upon the solution of this crime?

A Yes, sir.

Q And you are certain that you saw no one other than Mr. Coroline while you were in DeBussche's Lane?

A Yes, sir.

Q That night? A Yes, sir.

Q And you are certain that he saw no one other than you?

A Well, he didn't speak to me about seeing anyone.

Q And so far as you know he did not see anyone?

A So far as I know.

Q And you were right alongside of him all the time?

A Yes, sir.

Q And if he had seen anyone you certainly would have seen the same person too, wouldn't you? A Yes, sir.

Q And the only voices which you heard were those that seemed to be mumbling, as you recall it back of your ear, and then the scream between the shots; is that correct?

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A Yes, sir.

Q Going back to the conversations you may have had with Mr. Geraldine between your first and second call to Somerville, may I ask you this question? Did you and he at any of those conferences agree to withhold from the authorities any material fact concerning the happenings of that night, which you have not now already revealed to the authorities? A No, sir.

Q And you have told the police not the entire truth?

A Yes, sir.

Q And what you have told me is the same as you have told the State police? A Yes, sir.

MR. PERLIPER: I think that is all, Miss Rantall.

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